

## Upper Snake Region

The Upper Snake Region was occupied by 2 documented resident, 2 documented border, and 1 suspected resident packs during 2006 (Figure 12; Table 7). While both Copper Basin and Biscuit Basin packs reproduced, only the Biscuit Basin pack qualified as a breeding pair; lethal control removed all breeding-age wolves from the Copper Basin pack and thus disqualified them from breeding pair status. The primary source of mortality was lethal control ( $n = 6$ ), followed by other human causes ( $n = 2$ ). Two lethally controlled wolves were from a Wyoming wolf pack and were legally taken under the 10(j) Rule near Driggs, Idaho. Confirmed and probable cattle and sheep losses were attributed to the Copper Basin and Driggs/Teton packs (WY). There were also several other confirmed/probable depredations attributed to suspected (Bishop Mountain) or unknown groups of wolves. Five wolves were captured, resulting in the deployment of 4 standard VHF radiocollars and 1 GPS radiocollar.

### Law Enforcement Summary

Regional Conservation Officers, in consultation with USFWS Special Agents, investigated 2 incidents involving wolf shootings in the Teton Valley. The first wolf, killed near Victor in early May, was determined to be legal under the 10(j) Rule. The second wolf, killed near Victor 2 weeks later, was also determined to be legal under the 10(j) Rule. A Conservation Officer in Mackay retrieved a road-killed wolf near Arco. The same officer also investigated a wolf reported killed by a snare; it was later determined the snare was placed and left by WS personnel for coyote control.

### Documented Resident Packs

#### *Biscuit Basin*

Having relocated from Wyoming, this was the second consecutive year the Biscuit Basin pack resided in Idaho. Of the 2 radiocollared animals in the pack, 1 dispersed in winter and was later found lying in a road in the Tobacco Root Mountains of Montana. The animal was euthanized, and lab tests indicated the wolf was infected with Canine Distemper Virus. Three pups were observed in June at their den site, and aerial observations indicated a minimum of 6 wolves in the pack. This pack was considered a breeding pair in 2006.

#### *Copper Basin*

Reduced to adults B197 and B227 and 2 pups by the end of 2005, this pack denned and produced a litter of 6 pups in spring of 2006. In May, a wolf was trapped and instrumented with a GPS radiocollar with the intent of examining wolf-livestock interactions; however, the collar came off prematurely when the drop-off mechanism failed. Another 4 pups were captured and radiocollared, so this pack with a history of chronic livestock depredations could be better monitored. As in previous years, the Copper Basin wolves continued to exhibit a propensity for livestock depredations in this area of high cattle densities. With 5 confirmed/probable cattle losses and an additional sheep depredation over the course of the summer, 3 wolves were lethally removed in response: the suspected breeding pair and a subadult. The vacancy created by the removal of the 2 adults was quickly filled in December by male B253 (see B253 pair). Because of wolf control measures, this pack did not contain breeding adults at the end of the year and was not counted as a breeding pair for 2006.

### Documented Border Packs

#### *Bechler (WY)*

The Bechler pack was a Wyoming-documented pack that occasionally used the Idaho side of the state border near Driggs, Idaho.

#### *Driggs/Teton (WY)*

The Driggs/Teton pack was a Wyoming-documented pack that occasionally crossed the border into Idaho during spring 2006. In March, USFWS biologists collected a radiocollar that had been chewed off outside of Victor, Idaho, from a wolf previously collared in Wyoming. Two wolves were legally shot in Teton Valley under the 10(j) Rule in May. One domestic calf was confirmed killed by wolves on the ranch where these wolves were killed. A third wolf (B276) was radiocollared following the removals. The carcass of B276 was later located near the Idaho border in Wyoming in mid-August. Laboratory reports confirmed the wolf died of natural causes. While unverified wolf reports continued to come in from this area, it is believed this is no longer a viable pack.

### Suspected Resident Packs

#### *Bishop Mountain*

Bishop Mountain was a suspected pack that appeared to be derived from the Nez Perce pack of Yellowstone National Park. The only radiocollared wolf in this group was last located in September 2005. There were no radiocollars in this group during 2006, and therefore reproduction was not verified. One depredation of 1 domestic sheep was attributed to this suspected pack. Trapping efforts in response to livestock conflicts and for research purposes were unsuccessful.

### Other Documented Wolf Groups

#### *B93*

Displaced as breeding male from the Buffalo Ridge pack, this wolf was missing for several months before being located in the Big Wood River drainage in September. This animal continued to roam widely, and was last located within the Upper Snake Region in the Little Lost River drainage.

#### *B242*

Male B242 dispersed from the Moyer Basin pack during summer; he was eventually located when he was killed by a car north of Arco, Idaho, in October.



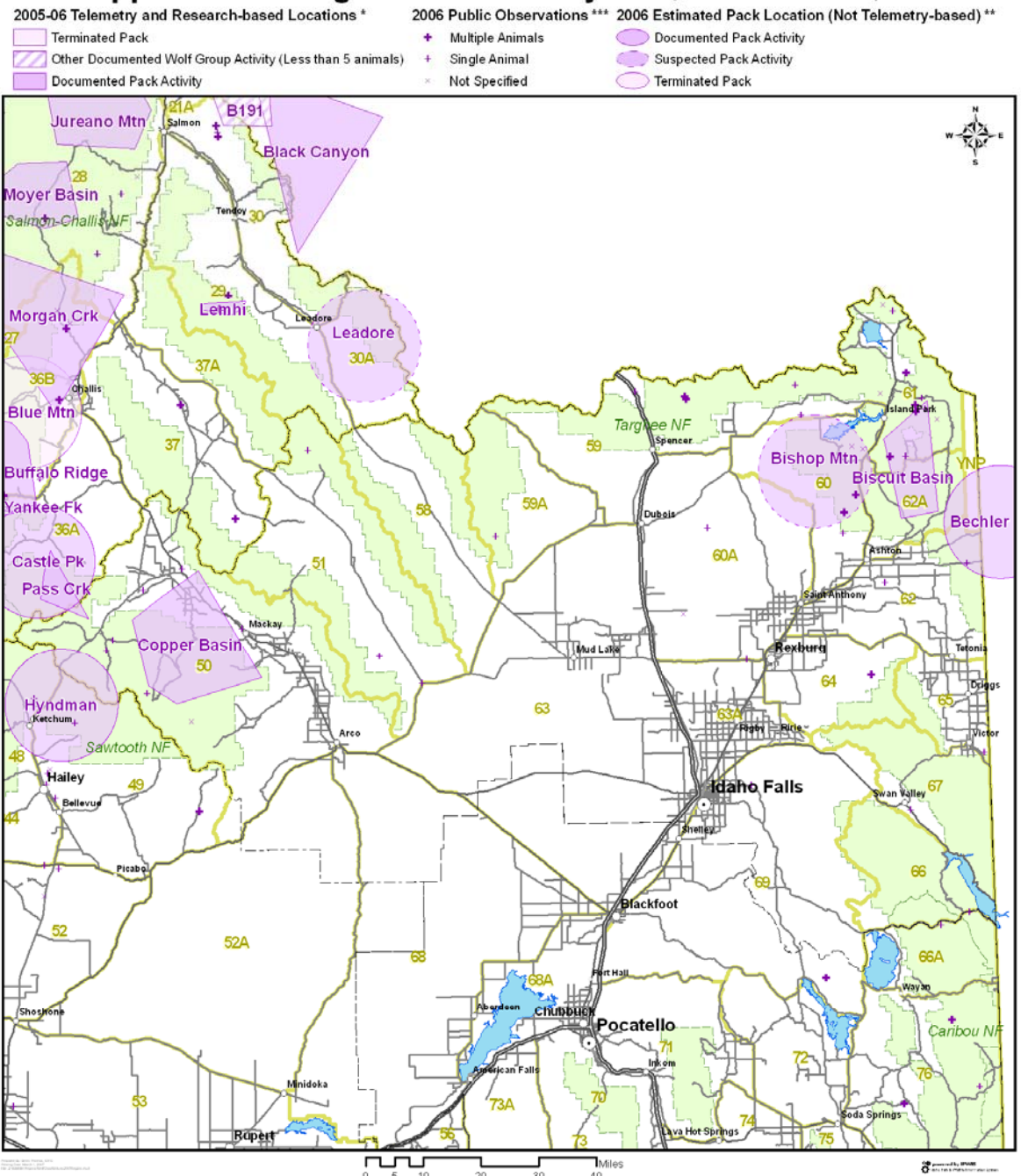
*Photo J. Husseman*

Wolf B242 appears ragged as he sheds from his thick winter coat.

### *B253*

This wolf was captured as a member of the Galena pack in 2005 and stayed until the following spring, when he dispersed. He was later located north of Copper Basin with an uncollared wolf. In August, this pair was implicated in the injury of a domestic calf, and the uncollared female was lethally controlled. B253 was not located again until December, when he was observed traveling with the Copper Basin pack (see Copper Basin).

## 2006 Upper Snake Region Wolf Activity



\* Telemetry and research locations collected and analyzed by Idaho Department of Fish and Game, the Nez Perce Tribe, Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks and the National Park Service. Pack locations are minimum convex polygons of telemetry and research observations for radio-collared wolves from 1/1/2005 - 12/31/2006 with outliers removed. Packs which did not exist in 2006 are excluded. This map is provided for management purposes and should not be used for data analysis. Do not release these data to third parties without first contacting the Idaho Department of Fish and Game or the Nez Perce Tribe.

\*\* Estimated Pack Activity determined by biologists from research locations, public observations and incidental observations from 1/1/2005 - 12/31/2006.  
\*\*\* Public Observations from 1/1/2006 - 12/31/2006 collected on the Idaho Fish and Game website and reviewed by staff biologists.

Map Produced by Idaho Fish and Wildlife Information System, Idaho Fish and Game in cooperation with: The Nez Perce Tribe; U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service; USDA APHIS Wildlife Services; Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks; and the National Park Service

Figure 12. Wolf pack activity and observations in the Upper Snake Region, 2006.

Table 7. Estimated pack size, reproductive status, mortality, dispersal, monitoring status, and livestock depredation for documented and suspected wolf packs within Idaho Department of Fish and Game Upper Snake Region, 2006.

Wolf pack or group	Reproductive status				Documented mortalities				Monitoring status			Confirmed & probable			
	Min. no. wolves detected <sup>a</sup>	Min. no. pups prod.	Reported as reprod. packs	Reported as breeding pairs <sup>b</sup>					Active radiocollars	Number wolves captured <sup>f</sup>	Number wolves missing <sup>g</sup>	wolf-caused	livestock losses		
					Natural	Control <sup>c</sup>	Other human <sup>d</sup>	Unknown <sup>e</sup>	Known dispersal				Cattle	Sheep	Dogs
Documented pack															
Bechler (WY) <sup>h</sup>															
Biscuit Basin	6	3	yes	yes	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Copper Basin	7	6	yes	no	0	3	0	0	0	3	5	0	5	1	0
Driggs/Teton (WY) <sup>h</sup>						2							1		
Subtotal	13	9			0	5	0	0	1	4	5	0	6	1	0
Suspected pack															
Bishop Mountain	0				0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Subtotal	0				0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Other doc. group															
B93	1				0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
B242	0				0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
B253 <sup>i</sup>	0				0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Subtotal	1				0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Unknown															
Subtotal					0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	12	0
					0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	12	0
Regional total	14	9			0	6	2	0	1	5	5	0	8	14	0

<sup>a</sup> Number of wolves detected by wolf program personnel through observations of wolves or wolf sign and believed alive at end of 2006. Unknown status denoted by “?” Sum of this column does not equate to number of wolves estimated to be present in the population.

<sup>b</sup> Breeding pairs are the measure of Federal and State wolf recovery and management goals. A breeding pair is defined as “an adult male and an adult female wolf that have produced at least 2 pups that survive until December 31 of the year of their birth...”.

<sup>c</sup> Includes agency lethal control and legal take by landowners.

<sup>d</sup> Includes all other human-related deaths.

<sup>e</sup> Does not include pups that disappeared before winter.

<sup>f</sup> Includes all wolves captured during 2006. Most, but not all, were radiocollared.

<sup>g</sup> Radiocollared wolves that became missing in 2006.

<sup>h</sup> Border pack officially tallied to (state); territory known or likely shared with Idaho. Data on these packs can be found in Rocky Mountain Wolf Recovery 2006 Interagency Annual Report.

<sup>i</sup> Remaining wolf B253 joined Copper Basin pack and was included in that pack’s statistical totals.